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TWO SERMONS

ON THE

KIND TREATMENT

AND ON THE

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EMANCIPATION OF SLAVES.

PREACHED AT MOBILE,

On Sunday the 10th, and Sunday the 17th of May, 1840.

WITH A PREFATORY STATEMENT.

BY GEO. F. SIMMONS.

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PREFACE.

It will immediately be perceived that the following sermons contain many arguments which have been more ably advanced in other writings, and that, considered separately from the occasion, there is little in them to detain the attention of one who has attended to the subject before. They were meant for the benefit of the people to whom they were addressed; *and for no other purpose.*

In Mobile, Slavery was not to me an abstraction. Here were the slaves about me. I was served by them at home, and at the houses of my friends; and the relation between them and their masters seemed, and still seems to me, as much within the scope of Religious instruction, as the relation between husbands and wives, or between parents and children. Had I been silent on the subject, my silence would have been construed into assent to things as they were; and the duty in this relation was too difficult a matter to be enforced with sufficient fulness and solemnity in private. That a man's influence is small is no reason that it should not be well used. The best of us do but little

good in the world; and there is no conceit in attempting to effect that little. In my judgment, it is by a myriad of minute influences, such as I attempted to exert in the following discourses, that the minds of our southern citizens are finally to be rightly turned on the subject of their great interest.

Accordingly, without any undiscriminating zeal, I had, after a practical and sympathizing view of the actual state of things, foreseen that I must grapple with this rugged question; and indeed, at the beginning of the winter, in a letter written to the Trustees of the Society, replying to a request on their part that I should become their permanent pastor, I used the following language, which, I will add, is all that the letter contains on that subject.

"Moreover, were I ready to settle, the state of the public mind here with regard to slavery, would, I fear, not tolerate my presence. Believing, as I do, that slavery is wrong, and that man cannot hold property in man, the occasion calling for the expression of these opinions, could not long fail of presenting itself, especially in the exposition of those passages of Scripture, which condemn or which are thought to favor, the depression of a portion of the race into the condition of involuntary servants. On such occasions, I should preach what I believe to be the truth, with the utmost openness, and thereby draw public odium upon myself and upon the church. This result you would greatly deprecate.

"Nevertheless, were good of peculiar magnitude to be accomplished thereby, I should not hesitate to expose myself to whatever peril there might be from this quarter. But &c. &c."

Coming finally to the conclusion that, on the whole, and notwithstanding its dangers, the subject ought to be treated by me, I deferred the execution of the duty, from the natural reluctance one feels to undertake a difficult and disagreeable task, from the desire of offering my maturest thoughts, and finally with the hope that the longer I should have stood in the pulpit and associated with the people, the more kindly they might

receive, what I could not hope they would fully approve.

The first sermon I knew would be heard contentedly; and it was. The second also was listened to with attention and respect, although one person left the church.

The statements, that remonstrances were used with me after the first Sabbath, against treating the subject a second time; that on Sunday morning, the 17th, the church was crowded, in expectancy; and that in the evening the people expressed their disapprobation by a very small attendance, are all equally and wholly erroneous. On the morning of the second Sabbath, the congregation was no larger than usual; in the evening it was no smaller than usual, in similar states of weather; and during the week previous, unless my memory betrays me, no remonstrances were used against a continuance of the discussion, for no continuance was apprehended. In fact the first discourse was well received. Large slaveholders from the country, as well as those who belonged to my own people, said "it was all true and all needed;" and had the matter rested at this stage, the excitement would not have arisen. In the interval, I did not seek advice from my friends; because I already knew their opinions, and because I was unwilling to implicate them in the offence, by rendering them chargeable with having permitted it. Thus the second sermon was unexpected by the people, although necessary to the completion of my design.

What I had not calculated, was the effect of rumor on those who did not hear me, and the use political partizans might make of the occurrence.

On Monday morning I was accused before the

Grand Jury, who, after examining many witnesses, dismissed the complaint. I awaited their decision, and did not quit the place, until it was supposed to be final.

On Monday, friends waited on me, solicitous for my welfare and for the public peace. It was thought advisable that I should withdraw from the immediate presence of the multitude. That night I passed without the city. The next day the irritation was said to be increasing; and the knowledge that the Grand Jury was not about to act, disposed some individuals still more, to do me violence. It became the unanimous opinion of my advisers, that I had better go away. Accordingly the next night I went aboard a packet which lay at anchor in the harbor, where I remained until she sailed on the following Friday. From this retreat, I addressed a letter to a gentleman who had threatened to commit an assault upon me. He has seen fit to publish that letter, with a confession of the intended outrage.

The conduct of my friends in the whole affair had been honorable to them; the votes of the congregation, at a subsequent meeting, although regretful, were gratifying to me as expressive of a continuance of affectionate regard; and I have never felt so much interested in the church, or attached to the people, as since my separation from them.

Several circumstances are important to be borne in mind to prevent an unfair judgment of that people and of their city.

I was expelled from Mobile, not by the people of Mobile, but solely by a cabal in it.

The animosity did not arise within the church, nor

among those who heard me, but without the church, and almost exclusively among those who did not hear me.

Had I remained, I should have been protected. But I did not choose to be protected by the exposure of those who had not been consulted for my conduct, and if they had been, would have advised against it.

When I say that I should have been protected, I do not mean to allege, that I was justified or encouraged. I allow with grief, that the determination to suppress the discussion, seems to be general and resolute at the South. But it is not to be expected that freemen will long acquiesce in that determination.

There are, however, opponents of discussion, whose characters enforce respect, and whose position deserves to be well considered. They solemnly allege, that agitation of the question tends to insurrection and bloody revolution; that it threatens not only disaster, but destruction, to the interests both of master and slave; that the consideration of reform must be left entirely to those, on whom the heavy responsibility devolves of effecting it; and that, among them, it should be reserved for the halls of legislation; that, if the subject were not agitated, the South would prepare for the abandonment of slavery; but that while agitation continues, the public good imposes on them the necessity of stern and silent defiance. Such are the opinions of men, who on all other subjects are wise, and whose characters are above reproach. I respect those opinions; but I could not be persuaded by them; and at the risk of being charged with presumption, I felt called to act otherwise.

I wish not to be considered as expressing fellowship, or entering into alliance of any sort, with Abolitionism

in the northern states. Its spirit offends me. When I consider with what ease and irresponsibility a zeal in that cause is gotten up, and with what vanity and lightness of heart it is often associated, and then turn to the unfortunate master, from whom all the sacrifice and all the action is to come, and see him disheartened by reproach, and toiling under the difficulties of a question, in the solution of which, declamation will avail him nought, and abstract principles, unless carried out into practical wisdom, can be fruitful of no relief, struggling, not undevoutly, with a thousand perplexities, which the inhabitant of a free state cannot even comprehend, and which cast the unassisted mind into confusion and despair, I confess that my sympathies are with *him*. It is easy to be an abolitionist; but it is very difficult to be a humane, a judicious, a disinterested, slaveholder.

I repeat, then, that it was wholly in the interest of my southern friends, and with the most affectionate fellow-feeling towards them, that it was as identifying myself for the time with their society, that I addressed to them the discourses which are now published. *It was there and not here, that I was prompted thus to speak.* In New-England I should have been silent, or have addressed myself to the opponents of slavery, with exhortations to moderation and charity.

The discourses are here printed precisely as they were delivered; and I beg to be judged, not by what has been said of me, but by what I have said.

FIRST SERMON.

Colossians IV. 1.

MASTERS, GIVE UNTO YOUR SERVANTS THAT WHICH IS JUST AND EQUAL; KNOWING THAT YE ALSO HAVE A MASTER IN HEAVEN.

In this text by "equal" is meant equitable; and what is just and equitable would embrace all that we are required to do to our fellow men. My intention, however, is not to confine myself to the particular phraseology of this passage; but to follow the spirit which is inculcated elsewhere, as well as here, in the New Testament, by which Masters are to be guided in their conduct toward those who serve them. In the epistle to the Ephesians, after mentioning the duties of servants to their lords, Paul directs his exhortation to those lords themselves, saying "Ye masters, *do ye the same things unto them*, forbearing threatening," showing how the relation is a mutual relation, and that, as the inferior is bound to feel a genuine, unbought, and sacred attachment to the superior, so that superior is bound to look on the inferior with an equally true and active affection. And indeed the whole tenor of Christianity teaches us the same thing, it being characterized by benevolence, and enjoining that virtue of charity on us, as a thing without which all observances are vain; making the sum and substance of our earthly duty to consist in loving our neighbor as ourself, and instructing us that our neighbor

is our fellow-man; and that, whenever that fellow-man has fallen among thieves, or lies a beggar by the road side, or is sunk in any manner of distress, that then he has a peculiar claim on our sympathy and aid.

In enforcing this spirit, the example of Christ is peculiarly marked. The circumstances of outward condition he disregards; and his sympathy is more awakened by the poor cripple, and the maniac wandering among the tombs, than by the graces and wealth and pomp of those who fill the high places of the earth. In thinking over his life, I do not remember but one prominent instance of his having to do with a slave. It was at Capernaum, "a certain centurion's servant who was sick and ready to die"; and Jesus restored him by his word; nor are we to suppose that it was on the master's account alone that he wrought the beneficent miracle; for his whole life showed the Saviour to have a peculiar regard to those who were neglected by all others, or who occupied a low place in the world's esteem. The centurion is represented to have been a man of signal loveliness of character, to whom, therefore, the suffering slave was dear, (for that is the expression, "who was dear unto him") and the elders of the Jews interceded with Christ in his behalf, "saying, he is worthy for whom thou shalt do this; for he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue"; he was so humble also that he held himself unworthy to receive Christ under his roof, and had such faith in him as to believe that nothing more than a word was necessary to cause the disease to yield. It was *such a man* that we should *expect* to find holding a servant dear, and seeking his cure with the anxiety which he would have felt for a son.

And again, Paul's letter to Philemon, on returning his fugitive slave Onesimus, shows the profound affection and esteem which *he* could feel for individuals of that class. So that, besides the general inculcations of love for our fellow-men, the New Testament is not without its particular lessons for Masters in relation to laborers dependent on them;—the spirit

of which is expressed in the Text,—"Masters, give to your servants that which is just and equitable, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven," and justice and equity include all that we owe to our fellow-men, include genuine benevolence, as well as the payment of debts, or performance of promises.

We, in this part of America, are distinguished from most civilized countries by possessing a servile class; and this circumstance forms our great sorrow and difficulty, bringing with it peculiar and almost overwhelming temptations. But there can be nothing permanently evil in its results, if we are true to ourselves; for it is a part of our ordained lot; and God ordains nothing in evil. However much our ancestors may have erred; for us, this state of things, being already constituted, is to be considered as given us by God; and from whatever difficulties may accompany it, he will find us a way of escape, if we obey him. If we obey him not, all is lost; our peculiar trial will prove our destruction; we shall become corrupt, wicked, dead; we shall inherit woe in this world and in another.

Now the condition of the colored class is such as to awaken our deep compassion. From how many of our enjoyments are they wholly and hopelessly cut off in this life! Doomed to toil for others' benefit more than for their own, and subjected to the arbitrary will of another whom they do not choose, always in the possibility of being sold to strangers, and severed from whatever is dearest to them; they are without country and sometimes without home; they wander like Cain upon the earth, without Cain's guilt; they enter like Joseph into bonds, but without the intelligence of Joseph to support and console captivity, and without the remotest hope of rising like him, above it. They are born in fetters; in fetters must they die. And they are always in peril of falling (with the changes of fortune) into the hands of hard-hearted masters, who inflict on them cruelties which have never been surpassed. Add to this that, by education, they are almost without those fine feelings, which are the source of all the bliss we much value, and

possess but a meagre understanding of Christianity, which furnishes the consolations of sorrow, and is the nurse of spiritual pleasure. They are brutish and unaspiring. They enjoy but an initiatory, and unsatisfied being, and must look forward to another world, even for that height of happiness, which *we* may possess in this. Their indolence and childishness, their deceitfulness and perversity, being the natural results of their ignorance and of their condition, increase our compassion, rather than irritate our tempers; for we know that our virtues of enterprise and industry and veracity, so far as we possess them, are not to be claimed by us as merits, but are consequences of our discipline; that we are *educated* to be active, as the slave is to be sluggish, and if we have human hearts, we pity the poor man the more, that his condition is such as to repress the native exuberance of power and of thought, and hold him down to a monotony of reluctant drudgery.

On contemplating then the slave's lot, compassion and indulgence are the necessary result in every undepraved mind. And these are a constituent part of Christian charity; for pity is love for those who are in distress.

And while we compassionate the slave, we are not to forget that he is our brother, although with a colored skin, and with faculties less apt; that he looks forward to the same heavenly inheritance as we, and is an equal sharer in the redemption of the cross. We are not to forget that in him, all human capacities lie, though not yet unfolded; that in that darkened mind are hid the elements of the Imagination which in Milton entered Eden and the courts of Heaven, of the Reason which with Newton weighed the spheres, of the Religious Faith which made Paul the Apostle of the Gentiles, and led him by the hand through dangers now unknown; that in a future state these faculties, long pent, may be brought forth into illustrious action. And when we stagger at this contrast, and doubt whether our principles do not delude us, we may reflect on the great change which has been wrought in *us*, since we were helpless and senseless infants in our nurses' arms, and remind

ourselves of the fact that the inhabitants of the now glorious Britain were once regarded by the Romans, as incapable of elevation, and fit only to be serfs.

Yes, on every soul the divine image is stamped, and as the soul grows and expands, that likeness is capable of being brought forth with glorious and angelic lustre. This world is but introductory. At the high dawning of another, despised and abused spirits will be found opening into display of faculties long concealed, as the flower bursts into sudden glory under the first warmth of the morning. The poor African, when he has exchanged the darkened body for the livery of the skies, and is enlightened by a sudden access of that knowledge which was obtained by us below only with painful exertion, when he is encouraged and lifted up by the sight of the Lamb and of the benignant Father of glory, will seem not wholly unlike the best of the sons of earth,—will receive respect as his right, and happiness as his inheritance. The negro is our brother. To be regarded with fraternal feeling is therefore his *due*. We bestow it on him not as a favor, but as a debt.

The obligation on us, then, is very apparent, to treat and love him, as a fellow-laborer, and not as a tool; to seek his happiness, and when he is helpless, to make ourselves his guardian,—to seek his happiness by complying always with the demands of justice, by yielding him every thing which is equitable, by endeavoring to mitigate his sufferings, and to make his happiness of a continually higher and higher kind, through culture of his mind and giving him opportunity of improvement. If the laws forbid this, they are wicked, and must be repealed.

Thus by kindliness and encouragement in all our treatment of them, by increasing their happiness even as they are, and still more by attempting to lead them to such refined, and rational and elevating happiness as we ourselves would desire, are we to show our Christian love toward this portion of the race. I know that there are those who will smile at the very

idea of loving them. "What! Do you speak of affection as possible towards the brutish laborers of our fields and streets, towards men who do not even know what a refined thought is?" But those who deem such love impossible, have not yet begun to know Christianity. What reward have we, if we love only those whom it is instinctive to love, if our love be tried by nothing which tends to sever it? To love our amiable and affectionate friends requires no Religion; it is perfectly consistent with a low state of heart; it is not a virtue, but an impulse. But our Christian benevolence is tried, when we turn to the unhonored, the ignorant, the repulsive, or those with whom our spirits are not congenial. There it will be seen whether we have exalted Charity to be the rational principle of our whole nature, whether our heart really beats for our fellows, or only for those who flatter and solace it. Far from love being impossible towards our common colored laborers, it is the natural emotion in a pure mind, on contemplating their condition. We do not see them overworn with toil, or deprived of comfort and hope, or suffering in any way, or on the other hand, performing acts of faithfulness and friendship, without sympathizing with them, and wishing to relieve them. Selfishness and cupidity are stern and severe. But while the mind is not excited by passion, nor blinded by interest, nor hardened by former guilt, it is not without fellow-feeling for the slave. And when taught by Christianity, it puts forth a new sympathy, a sympathy far more penetrating and active, a heavenly and constant love.

But some one may here whisper to himself, that I suffer my enthusiasm to carry me away, that that love must remain merely nominal, so long as there is such a vast distance between us and its objects, so long as they are so gross, and ignorant, and uncongenial with us; that this distance is too great for real affection. But is the separation so vast? And does it preclude the idea of love? Is not the Eternal Father raised *infinitely* above us; and are we too low to be reached by *his* affection? And has the great Christian Idea not yet dawned

in our minds, that we are to imitate that Father, "to be his followers as dear children"? In the sight of God the inequalities among men sink into comparative insignificance, as the hills and vallies of the plain become unnoticeable from the mountain-cliff. God never ceases to love us through all our folly and perverseness. Our brutish thoughts, our continual ingratitude, our indolence, and childish frivolity and passions, never drive away *his* tender providence. Can we do other than imitate that long suffering towards those whom he commands us to bear with and protect? Does not the knowledge of that Universal Father draw us nigh to our least favored brethren? Does not the thought of his universal care make mutual kindness an act of devotion? Does it not confer a new dignity on every man? Shall we despise any for whom the Creator wakes the morning and shuts the evening, and pours forth his myriad provisions of happiness and use? Shall we despise one who is invited to heaven, and may one day wear the crown and wave the palm? Our common faculties, which in none of us are more than in infancy, our common hopes which make the felicity of the future outshine and eclipse all the advantages of the present, bring all men to much the same level, cast superficial distinctions into obscurity, and bind us to all by a feeling of companionship. We are not indeed to select our associates from those uncongenial with us. From the whole human race to which we are bound by Religion, we select but a few kindred hearts to be our familiar friends. But the excluding circumstance is not so much outward as within. The virtuous man has far greater aversion for his white brother whom sense and passion have brutalized, than for his colored servant whose character is adorned by temperance and purity.

"Masters, give to your servants that which is just and equitable, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven." A part of your debt to them is a tender interest in their welfare. As citizens and as private men, always act for them in this spirit. All wicked laws rescind. All unnecessary restraints

remove. Pity their sufferings and be zealous for their elevation. Protect them in their homes. Seek to make their domestic relations secure. Be indulgent to them in your requisitions; be ready to pardon, as you hope for pardon above. Presume not to make them the mere instruments of your comfort and advantage; but prepare always to answer for your treatment of them, before that Being who is no respecter of persons; remembering how great capacities of virtue, what elements of moral beauty, of intelligence and comprehensive thought, what germs of celestial glory lie undeveloped even in their disregarded minds. By true affection, extended to them not as a favor, but as a debt, endeavor to call forth within them an answering attachment, so that they may serve us, " not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men," so that the burden of bondage may be lightened by a willing spirit, and they shall bless God that they were taken from the dark shores of Africa, to inhabit among a Christian people, where they may learn the divine truth uttered through Jesus, and see it enforced and beautifully exemplified in the character and conduct of their white brethren. Then it will no longer be a mystery to us, why a good Father allowed this transportation and bondage, and placed us in these distressful straits. We are thrown into no straits, from which there do not lead paths of duty, guiding us, though over rugged ways, into regions of security and sacred satisfaction. Remember that the trial of our faith consists in our peculiar temptations; and that it is very evident, where, with us, those peculiar temptations lie, that an awful responsibility and peril lie in our relation to the colored class, a responsibility and peril which make the mind tremble and groan, and that it remains to be seen whether Christianity has life enough within us to bear us up and carry us through safely,—whether our hearts are to be hardened like that of Pharaoh, or made tenderly sympathizing and self-forgetful like that of Paul and of his crucified Master.

Already Slavery numbers its victims. In many it has caused corruption and debauchery, a hard and hopeless brutality, which nought in this world can cure; in some of you here present it has resulted in a severity and injustice, which in other countries would be a wonder; in most it has given rise to a shame of labor, which is disgraceful in men and in republicans: but in many also it has been the occasion of bringing forth a new tenderness of sympathy, a tolerance, a self-sacrifice, a regard for the human mind even when clouded and veiled, which will shine illustriously in another world, as they afford an enchanting spectacle in this. Make yourselves of this latter class. Give to your servants all that regard and affection, which is their due, which their miseries and vices make only the more necessary, and await your reward from Him who is alike your Lord and theirs.

SECOND SERMON.

I ASK your attention once more to the text which engaged our consideration on the morning of the last Sabbath. "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal (or equitable); knowing that ye also have a master in heaven"; and propose to attend still farther to the teachings of Christianity concerning our relations with the servile class.

There are some who object to all mention of the subject in public, thinking that it is too exciting to be treated profitably in any way. But, the more exciting the topic, the more important that Religion should pour in its tranquilizing influence; and as our difficulties and straits become more embarrassing, the more solicitous should we be for the guidance of divine truth; which never comes amiss; which enlightens darkness, which calms irritated feeling, which tempers the extravagance of enthusiasm, and beautifully reconciles the rights and true interests of all the children of God. On questions of an agitating and doubtful nature, it may sometimes be profitable to dissuade the expression of private opinion, of the judgments and desires and fears of individual minds; on account of the apprehension that men may be irritated and goaded by it. But in the Church it is quite different. Whoever is there excited to anger, when the instructions of Religion are faithfully proclaimed, brands himself as an infidel and a rebel, he immediately makes himself an outlaw from

the kingdom of Jesus Christ, and is to be ranked among the enemies of the human race.

The rule which is to guide us in all our relations to our fellow men in that which has been called the golden rule: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them"; this is declared to be "the law and the prophets." This is the spirit of all the social teachings of God's Word in the Old and in the New Testaments. This is to be our guide in all our actions and all our feelings towards others. It is not occasional or conditional; but it is universal. It is our Christian duty to aim never to swerve from it; and just in proportion as we do swerve from it, we fall under condemnation.

The meaning of the injunction obviously is, that we should do unto others, whatever, *in an enlightened view* of our interests and rights we should desire them to do unto us; not whatever we might, in like circumstances, *capriciously* and *selfishly* desire. For instance, were we very ignorant and poor, we might desire that some person of wealth, should transfer to us all his property; but that certainly is not to be done by him; for therein the claims of others who are dependent on him, and of himself would be disregarded. We are to regard and treat others, as it would be right for us to wish others to regard and treat us. And while we are disinterested, we should also be just and impartial in our benevolence. We come back then to the direction of our text, that we are to give to our servants that which is just and equitable; not give them whatever they ask, but whatever they would ask if they were wise; to study their true interests; and to aim to promote those interests as we should aim to promote our own. If we thoroughly, earnestly, and without reserve, purpose to act by these principles, our road will become comparatively plain, many perplexing questions will be immediately resolved, and we shall tread confidently and with happy anticipations the path of duty.

When we ventured upon the subject formerly, we considered to what sort of treatment of our servants those principles would lead us. I propose now to inquire how those principles affect their claim for liberation.

If it be true, as it is asserted to be, and as I suppose it is, that a great part of the colored servants are so accustomed to be taken care of, that they cannot take care of themselves, so indolent that they would not labor except urged by others, and so improvident that the supplies of tomorrow would be left to accident, and whatever they had to-day be used for intemperate and vicious indulgence, it is plain that we should do very wrong to turn them loose upon the world; for we feel that we, in like circumstances, with our present clear views of interest, should supplicate to continue to be protected and employed. It would be like a father turning his children at a tender age into the streets. But the incapacity for freedom, is itself an evil to be deplored and removed. It is not natural. It cannot be rightly permanent. For every man is made to work out his own happiness in this world and in another, by the unfettered use of his own faculties; and it is only when made free, that the resources of his nature are drawn forth, that in ever new enterprises and attempts, animated by all the hopes and spirit of liberty, he puts forth those manly powers, which, though unsuspected in him before, are hidden in the recesses of every human soul. That man is born to be free, is now a proposition every where allowed. In our country in particular, it has become a familiar axiom. While one is unfit to be trusted with this birthright, he is but in an infancy of being; he continues in a prolonged boyhood; he has not yet become a man, and the dignity, the happiness, and the hopes of manhood are denied him. That he should be fitted for freedom, and made wholly free, becomes then the aim of one who acts towards him in the spirit of Christian fraternity. If his own safety require that like a child he should, for the present, be

constrained, and subject to the will of a master, his constraints should be made no greater than are necessary, they should be merely temporary, devised for the present exigence; the idea of him and his children being bound forever can never be tolerated; his right being recognised, he must be held merely in guardianship, and not as an instrument for our gratification or profit; the relation must be a mutual and fraternal one, in which he serves us in return for benefits conferred, and is disciplined for his own advancement in intelligence and virtue and practical capacity. If we doubt about the justice of this requirement, then refer to the rule that we are to do unto others as we would that they should do unto us, and ask ourselves whether we should expect or rightfully demand any thing less, were *we* in that state of servitude.

Let these few remarks suffice with regard to that portion of our colored servants who are not fit to be immediately freed from their restraints. There remain another class consisting of those who are able to take care of themselves, and are capable of judging of their own good. In these as in all others, the right to liberty remaining unalienated and inalienable, nothing but the strongest considerations of public good can authorize its being any longer suspended. Or if insuperable practical difficulties present themselves in the way of legislation, and emancipation continue to be forbidden by law, then the master, holding such an one in his dependence, must regard him as a freeman, must give him the fruits of his labor, must secure him in his domestic rights, must protect him from all wrong, and afford him opportunity, while he lives, to answer the ends of life, and to prepare to enter another, and less oppressive world. Nothing less than this can possibly be deduced from the golden rule of Christian morals. Nothing less than this can be proposed to you as your duty, except by one strangely deluded, or by one who cares more for your opinion than for truth.

The principle on which Slavery is founded is entirely overthrown by the fundamental principle of Christian morality.

Christianity makes all men our brethren. Slavery makes men our tools. And the fallacy of its principle is fully allowed here as well as elsewhere. I do not appeal to the majority of slaveholders; because the majority of this class, as well as of other classes, is bad, and is not to be trusted to discern and confess truth through the cloud of interest; but I appeal to that minority, of magnanimous, honorable, and benevolent men, in whom the golden principles of the community are treasured up, and who deserve to be considered the voice of the community in all questions of justice and equity. They allow, the better class among us freely *allow*, that the principle of slavery is wrong, that Christianity requires us to consider all men our brethren, that each man has his rights, and that they cannot be denied him and he be degraded into a *thing* to be possessed for others' good; they do not claim to own their servants as they own their ploughs and their horses; but they own them as they own a wife and children; hold them under their care and direction, for the servants' own prosperity and spiritual advantage, by a discipline resulting in mutual benefit and happiness. The idea that men can be owned, strictly speaking, *as property*, will find few advocates among the good.

Thus will Christianity eat out the heart of Slavery even while Slavery continues. The servitude will not be a grinding bondage; but a mutual and fraternal dependence. While the outward relation continues the same; the virtual relation will be entirely changed. The servants will be slaves, only in the letter of the law; while in fact they are regarded by their Christian master as his wards, and indulged in whatever freedom they can profit by. To feed and clothe them, he will deem but a part of his duty; to teach, to encourage them, to make them manly and intelligent, and enlighten them with Christian truth, will be a more important responsibility and equally incumbent; and thus, while legislatures are unprepared to act; and philanthropists are afraid to speak; and a silent tolerance continues to brood over an Institution in itself cor-

rupt, will the pure and irresistible principles of Christianity have noiselessly, in many places, destroyed its essence, and left only its name and some of its legal constraints. The teachings of Christianity are practicable, even where the laws do not conform to them. They forbid us to make our fellow man an instrument for our profit or pleasure. They tell us he is our brother. If he be ignorant and oppressed, they tell us to enlighten and deliver him. These teachings may be called vague, and abstract, and unpractical; but the truly good man will easily find how to act according to them; and his whole conduct towards the servile class will be governed and sanctified by their spirit.

But with these qualifications and mitigations, many find a sanction for the existence of the Institution itself, in the alleged facts, that it was authorized under the Mosaic dispensation, and tolerated under that of Christ. This position deserves to be well considered; that we may decide how far what is alleged, is true; and then how it bears on us of modern times.

When Moses was sent to lead and organize the Jewish people, he found Slavery already existing and established; and the laws which he dictated to the Jewish Commonwealth, did nothing with regard to it, but limit the power of masters, defend the bondmen in certain rights, and provide for the liberation of some, suffering the existing state of things to continue, only mitigated and alleviated. Slavery, such as it exists in our country, that is chattel-Slavery, by which the bondman is reckoned as part of the personal property of his master, did not exist under the Jewish laws. Their bondmen were of two sorts, first Hebrew servants who were to be restored to liberty without fail on the year of jubilee, which was every seventh year, and might be redeemed at any time previous, by the payment of the amount of the wages of a hired servant for what remained of the period; and secondly, servants taken from foreign nations, or children of the strangers dwelling in the land, who were bound in perpetuity, and were to be a possession for

the Jewish master and for his children forever. But the law contains no permission that these should be sold. They were vassals of a family; and with that family they were to remain; a condition more resembling the condition called "Villenage," than Slavery as it has been planted in this region of the world. For men being bought and sold, held as the mere transferable tools of industry, to be driven about hither and thither like cattle, as the interests of the master may demand, the Jewish laws contain no sanction whatever. All their regulations with regard to servants are conceived in quite a different spirit. They are provident of the servant's rights. They protect him against cruelty. When fleeing from a master of another nation, they forbid him on any account to be restored. They provide for his instruction in the Faith, and reckon him as equal with his master before God.

These differences between Slavery as it exists among us, and that authorized by the Jewish law, are worthy of being noticed. From the main fact, however, what inference can be drawn? Slavery was permitted by the Mosaic code with certain limitations and mitigations. Can that sufferance be brought to show its lawfulness among us? Certainly not. For the same mode of argument would make polygamy admissible, since this was allowed by the Jewish law and practised by the Jewish people. Yet can any be found to maintain on this ground, that a man may, without sin, have several wives, if he only treat them all with kindness? The Jewish was an imperfect dispensation, designed for the infancy of the race. We have a more perfect law. Nothing is permissible to us, except that which, according to Christ, is just. If we would find therefore what Revelation approves, we must turn to *his word.*

Christianity sought to make no violent revolutions in the civil relations of men. Its office was to change the world by means of a spiritual influence, a moral regeneration. Had it declared freedom to slaves, and taken their part against their masters, it would immediately have been obliged to engage in

an outward conflict. It therefore addresses itself to men in whatever condition of life it may find them; making light of outward condition, so the mind be rightly set. "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. Art thou called being a servant, care not for it. But if thou mayest be made free, use it rather." But while it thus tolerates the servile relation, because incorporated with the constitution of society, it eats out its core and saps its foundations by silently working principles, and prepares its final extinction. The servants are exhorted to obey their masters from religious motives, not because their service is their masters right. They are to free themselves, if possible; but otherwise to resign themselves to their lot, and to care little for it, since it is outward and of short duration. Masters are exhorted to give to their servants that which is just and equal; and Philemon is besought to receive the fugitive Onesimus, not as a servant, but as a brother beloved. In short the great principle of human brotherhood and mutual love, struck the fetters from the captive's limbs. The Christian gives to others only what he would be ready and bound, in like circumstances, to receive. He is to make himself the instrument of good to all. Of course, he cannot degrade others to be the mere instruments of pleasure or gain to him. Their rights as men, their immortal interests, their Christian hopes take precedence of all things else. These are first in his mind, in all his dealings with others. This spirit of Christianity, my friends, must finally cast off every yoke. It has done so in all civilized countries except our own; but no people has been called to so arduous a duty as we. We are surrounded by difficulties and dangers through which nothing but Religion can ever lead us in safety. Let us faithfully cleave to that Heavenly Guide.

It is not to be controverted that Christianity brought no express and direct prohibition of Slavery. As little however did it bring an express and direct prohibition of despotism; and yet in our times and country, it need not be argued

that Christianity asserts the liberties of a nation. In the new Testament men are commanded without discrimination to submit to political rulers. As well might we reason from this in favor of passive obedience, and condemn thereupon our revolutionary fathers and all who have withstood the tyranny of monarchs, as draw conclusions in favor of Slavery from the silence of the New Testament with regard to it, and the exhortation to servants to obey their masters.

How can we suppose that Christ looked upon Slavery other than with disapprobation? Do we reflect on what Slavery was in his day? that it was not merely of the ignorant and low, who were fit only to be the drudges of society, and needed the strong arm of a master to control them, but that it embraced the philosopher, the poet, the accomplished female with its bonds, the delicacy and splendor of whose gifts did not prevent their being subject to the will of a sometimes capricious or wicked master? And are we prepared to maintain that Christ approved of *this*, because he did not condemn it? Did he not find the world teeming with wrong, and society laden with evil, and is his silence in any particular to be reckoned in opposition to those principles of religion which he gave forth, as the powers that were to subdue all wrong?

No. The question, as a question of Right and of Religion, seems to be very plain. Slavery is wrong. We can own servants only as we own wives and children. They cannot be a part of our property; nor, without great injustice can they be treated as such. This conclusion, indeed, is not in general controverted. While it remains abstract and general, it is allowed. But when we come to apply it to our own circumstances, we are perplexed with doubts, and a thousand insuperable difficulties are thought to present themselves before us. The incapacity of people long inured to bondage, their reluctance to work except when compelled, our entire dependence on them for the necessary labor in our fields and houses, are supposed to make it necessary to continue the bondage of

the present generation. But in a few years the present generation will be gone: and does this reason apply to the generation that is to come? May not the law decree the freedom and provide for instruction in necessary knowledge, and for the necessary discipline and protection, of those born after the present time? May it not mitigate the condition of those now living, by permitting them to be instructed, by securing them in their families from forced separations, and from violation of their sacred rights? Ought not some limit to be set to the freedom with which they are bought and sold? In short, *if Slavery be wrong, ought not the removal of it to be the settled policy of the people among whom it exists?*

But while the people are too supine to act through the way of law, the individual need not be dead. By great kindness and thoughtfulness towards his laborers, making them happy and devising ever new plans for their good, struggling unweariedly against the difficulties and disgusts of his situation, he may leave nothing of Slavery but its name and its legal disabilities, he may wholly free himself from the charge of oppression and be hailed by his servants as their great benefactor. The duty of each of us will appear plain, in proportion to the singleness of heart with which we pursue it. Before the steady gaze of a pure purpose, the clouds that hang over our path will disappear.

Thus, my friends, I have accomplished my difficult duty of uttering to you, what appear to be the teachings of Religion on this forbidden subject. I have not spoken my own thought. I have not suffered myself to listen to my own wishes or fears. The opinion of this or that mind is nothing. Our question is singly this,—what is *the will of God* toward us in this thing? Under His protection we may laugh at fear. Interest, reputation, the excitements and prejudices of the day sink and vanish; and we seek to solve the great problem of our social con-

dition, by looking into the eternal truth of things, and the immutable and shining duties of Religion. Such views never come amiss. Even when nothing is to be done, they prepare us for the future, and make us satisfied to be quiet. They give stability to our otherwise fluctuating ideas. They yield us confidence in ourselves. They calm all irritated feeling, they raise us to serene and elevated thought, and prepare us for sacrifices and toil. Religion is never an intruder.

Notwithstanding this, however, I have found a strong motive to dissuade me from venturing on the subject, I have now treated, in the apprehension that the treatment of it might prejudice our infant church in the opinion of the community. Let me say therefore, that thus to shift the responsibility upon the church, would be wholly unjust. I am forced to confess, that the members of our denomination are in general as little favorable to the discussion of this great interest as those of any other. I fear there is not an individual in our society who would not have dissuaded all mention of it. They of course are not to be blamed for what they would not have approved. The odium, if such there be, belongs to me.

I am well aware, also, that I expose myself to much misrepresentation. To this, and to a thousand ill-natured and pusillanimous reproaches, to the bickering and cavils of the foolish and superficial, and to the anger of the wicked, as well as to the disapprobation and complaint of many whom it is painful to offend, to all these I resigned myself when I began. I had come to a rugged passage in the path of duty. What right had I to falter or complain ?

But to avoid, as far as possible, being misunderstood, let me say, in conclusion, that I am not an Abolitionist, (in the technical sense which is given to the word) ; but that, on the contrary, men of that persuasion have greatly reproached me for my opposition to them. But I am one of

that large and increasing body of Christians, who hold Slavery to be wrong, and are earnest for its removal. To be thus is not matter of choice. Thus far the spirit of Paul and of Jesus Christ constrains me.

And finally, whatever may be the opinions, the hopes and fears, of different men, fail not to view the whole matter habitually in the light of Religion. If you follow that light, you can never go astray, you can never fall into any lasting calamity.